Natural Resources Commission Meeting

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife & Fisheries

February 13, 2014

Proposed Orders

- NRC – For Action
  - License Updates to Align with 2013 PA 108 (WCO Amendment No. 2 of 2014)

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

- Fisheries Chief Update
- Wildlife Chief Update
- Winter and Wildlife
- CWD Response Plan Review

Fisheries Division Update

Department of Natural Resources

Jim Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division
February 13, 2014

Fisheries Update

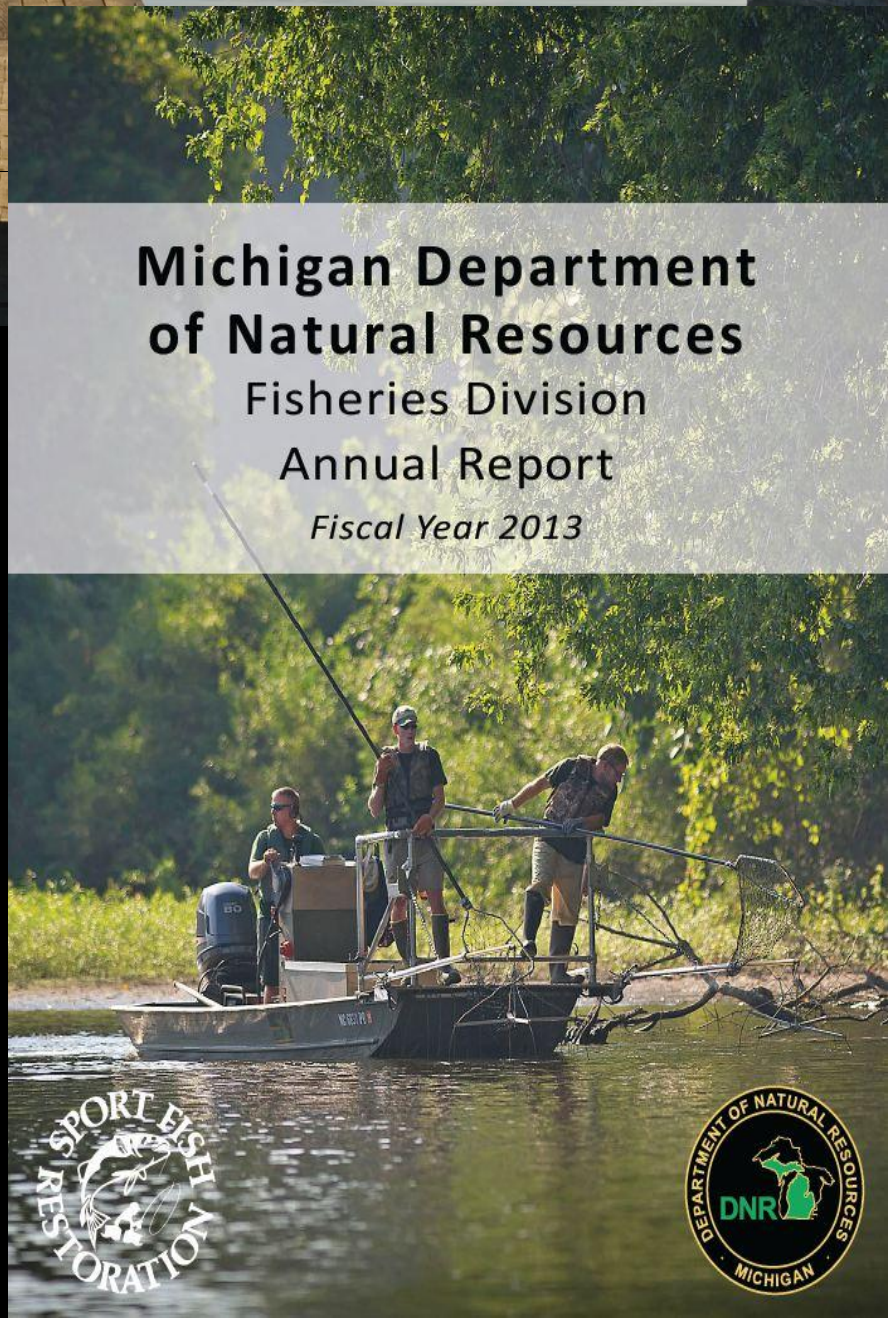
- February 1 Black Lake Sturgeon Fishery
- Lake Michigan Yellow Perch Summit
  - March 22 Chicago

AIS Landing Blitz

- Outreach campaign to raise awareness
- June 6 & 7th
- 6-8 lakes that have active partners

2013 Annual Report

- Structured to follow Strategic Plan
  - Healthy waters
  - Fishing opportunities
  - Partnerships
  - Assessments
  - Division operations



2 new state records!!

Department of Natural Resources

Thank You!

Wildlife Division Update

Russ Mason, Chief
Wildlife Division
February 13, 2014

Michigan Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation Awards

Outstanding Conservationist of the Year for 2013!

Lisa Jackson,

Wildlife Division

Michigan Officer of the Year for 2013!

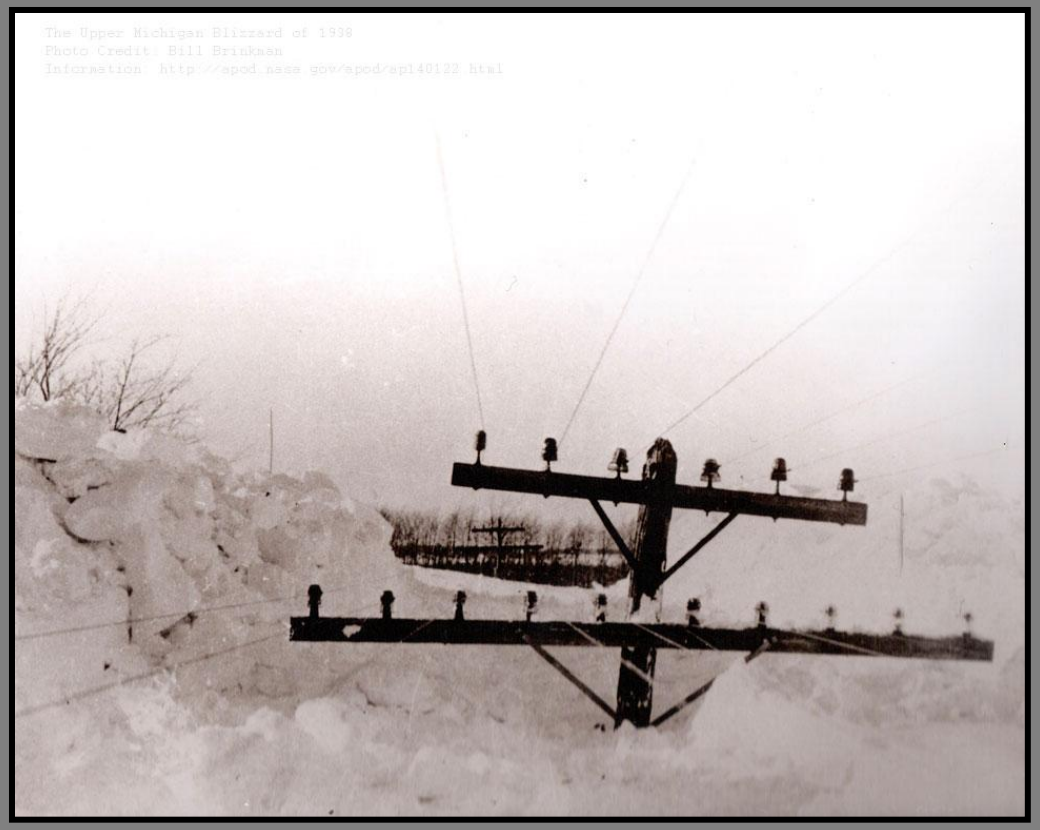
Jason McCullough,

Law Enforcement Division

Thank You

www.michigan.gov/wildlife

Winter and Wildlife



Brent Rudolph, Deer and Elk Program Leader
Wildlife Division
February 13, 2014

Winter Weather Impacts

- Michigan wildlife are adapted to survive harsh winter conditions
- “Severe” weather benefits some wildlife (e.g., ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare)
- It is important to acknowledge Michigan citizens’ concerns and interests in wildlife

2013-14 Winter and Deer

- Monitoring efforts:
  - Winter Severity Index
  - UP snow depth measurements
  - Field observations
  - Public contacts
- Deer survival and productivity will decline, particularly if spring breakup is delayed

Observations and Data Compilation

- Online winter mortality report
- Weekly internal field reports
  - Direct observations
  - Public reports & follow up
  - Regional Supervisor summaries to Wildlife Division

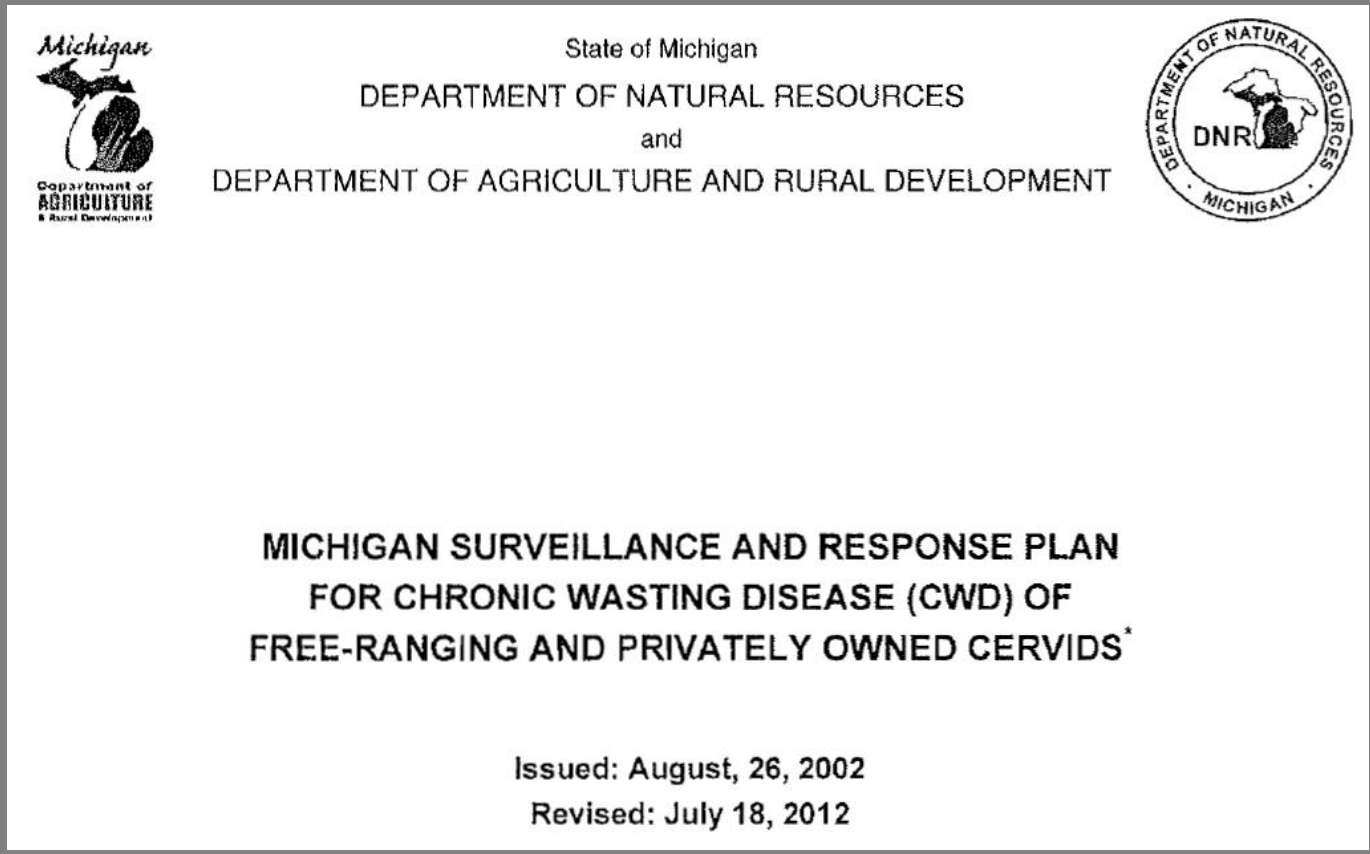
Communications Efforts

- Severe winter talking points: inform staff, distribute at outdoor shows
- Considerations for feeding wildlife
  - Review regulations for deer and elk
  - Advice to reduce unintended harm
  - Summarize disease manual information
- Wildlife Division Website revisions
  - Update ample background material
  - Provide link to winter mortality report

Thank You

www.michigan.gov/wildlife

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Response Plan Review



State of Michigan

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

and

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MICHIGAN SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE PLAN FOR CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD) OF FREE-RANGING AND PRIVATELY OWNED CERVIDS*

Issued: August, 26, 2002

Revised: July 18, 2012

Dan O'Brien, Veterinary Specialist
Wildlife Disease Laboratory
February 13, 2014

Brief overview of the Plan

- Revised in July 2012 (pp. 2-3)
- Reviewed the scientific literature (~240 references), summarized into 11 principles to guide management (pp. 3-4, Appendix)
- Separate, but cooperative, surveillance and response plans for wild (MDNR) and privately-owned (MDARD) cervids

Free-ranging (wild) deer, elk, moose: Surveillance (testing)

- Goal: Determine presence/absence & extent of CWD (p. 4)
- Ongoing routine: passive, targeted (test skinny &/or abnormally-behaving animals reported by staff, public)
- Outbreak: active, geographically focused (test culled and/or hunter-harvested animals obtained via mandatory check after identifying a CWD-positive)

Free-ranging deer, elk, moose:
Surveillance to date: all CWD-negative

SPECIES	TOTAL
DEER	34,180
ELK	1,598
MOOSE	70
ALL	35,848

	YEAR	Active	Road-kill	Targeted	TOTAL
DEER (detail)	1998	459	0	0	459
	2002	4,305	22	46	4,373
	2003	5,516	50	54	5,620
	2004	6,721	38	62	6,821
	2005	1,606	19	78	1,703
	2006	1,460	9	73	1,542
	2007	1,352	7	48	1,407
	2008	9,024	232	88	9,344
	2009	1,064	11	61	1,136
	2010	834	11	50	895
	2011	758	0	40	798
	2012	5	0	28	33
	2013	6	0	40	46
	2014	1	0	2	3
	TOTAL	33,111	399	670	34,180

Free-ranging deer, elk, moose: Response to a positive

- Goals:
  - 1) Limit further CWD transmission
  - 2) eradicate if “surveillance suggests that is likely to be achievable” (p. 6)
- Trigger for response: CWD identified in either a PO or wild cervid, in MI or within 10 miles of the MI border (p. 6)

Free-ranging deer, elk, moose: Response to a positive

- What happens then: (p. 6)
  - Population survey to determine species presence, density, distribution
  - Establish CWD Management Zone (MZ):
    - Map the index case, draw a 10 mi radius (5 mi for POCs) around it
    - "At a minimum, any county the boundary of which is intersected by that radius will be defined as part of the MZ" (pp. 7,8)
    - Provision to expand if cervids likely to move beyond MZ boundaries (pp. 6,7)

Free-ranging deer, elk, moose: Response to a positive

- What happens then:
  - Initiate actions in the MZ: (p. 6)
    - "Implement a deer feeding and baiting ban, which at a minimum should include the entire MZ"
    - Prohibit movement of carcasses & parts (both POC and wild) out of MZ
    - Intensify surveillance: Mandatory check and testing of all cervids taken in the MZ
  - Establish surveillance goals (based on pop. survey, current science, et al.)
  - Conduct surveillance (p. 7)

Free-ranging deer, elk, moose: Response to a positive

- What happens then:
  - Present results to Department and NRC for informed decisions (consistent with their legal authorities) concerning the necessity, nature and extent of response actions (p. 8)

CWD management: What's worked, what's sort of worked, what hasn't worked

- Measures to prevent establishment (detect infected animals asap, keep densities low, minimize aggregations, regulate/enforce POCs, carcass movement)
- Agency culling (holds prevalence steady by ↓ incidence, **but** doesn't stop spread, decreases hunter success at county, but not regional, scale)

"Frequent and continuing intervention with at least moderate intensity of culling (28-59 deer/section/year) were needed to reduce CWD prevalence"

Mateus-Pinilla et al., *Prev. Vet. Med.* 110:541-548 (2013)
Manjerovic et al., *Prev. Vet. Med.* (in press).

CWD management: What's worked, what's sort of worked, what hasn't worked

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- Hunter-harvest alone (growing prevalence, spread in WI, WY, CO, WV)

Timely food for thought

HEALTH AND DISEASE

Elk Winter Feeding = Disease Facilitation

THE THREAT AS CWD APPROACHES WESTERN FEEDGROUNDS

By Bruce L. Smith

Credit: Diana Smith

Bruce Smith, Ph.D., is a retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist who now writes full-time to promote conservation of wildlife and wildlands.

"The recreational value of a game animal is inverse to the artificiality of its origin and the intensiveness of the management system that produced it." — Aldo Leopold, 1933

As winter settles across the West, nearly 32,000 elk are gathering at 46 feedgrounds scattered across five western states. More than 70 percent of these animals are fed in western Wyoming each winter at 22 state-run feedgrounds and at the federal National Elk Refuge (NER). Winter feeding arguably enhances recreational and economic benefits by sustaining wild elk in numbers beyond available habitat and social constraints. But this unusual management system is fraught with complex political and biological problems.

Based on my 22 years as the biologist at the NER, the most challenging problem is the task of managing diseases fostered in dense aggregations of wildlife, a concern that has grown over the years (Smith 2011). In a previous article, I reviewed the origins, scope, justifications, and liabilities of feeding wild elk (Smith 2001). In 2013, I surveyed wildlife managers and learned that similar numbers are still being fed by state and federal agencies, though some changes have occurred (see chart on page 43). Following a synopsis in *The Wildlife Professional* (Miller 2012) of how game farming has facilitated the spread among private herds of chronic wasting disease (CWD)—an emerging disease of North American cervids—I felt a review was needed of artificial feeding and its potential influence on CWD in our wild, public herds.

I'm among those who argue that winter feeding (as well as baiting) serves neither the long-term health nor conservation of wildlife, and therefore is not in the public's best interests. As CWD has recently infected cervids within 50 miles of several elk feedgrounds (see map on page 43), two fundamental questions arise: "What happens when CWD reaches those feedgrounds, and should something be done now to address this threat?" The following briefly explores those issues.

Credit: Bruce Smith

Conditioned for handouts, thousands of elk line up along winter feed lines at the National Elk Refuge in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Alfalfa pellets provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service help sustain some 6,000 to 8,000 elk at the refuge, a popular wildlife spectacle for tourists but a potential source of disease transmission.

Roots of Winter Feeding

In 1909 at the NER's future site near Jackson, Wyoming, wildlife managers initiated the first government program of feeding elk (Smith 2011). As continental populations of elk collapsed and migrations from northwest Wyoming to winter ranges much farther south were eliminated, elk that remained in the Jackson Hole valley were fed to limit winter mortality and damage by elk to ranchers' hay. By the late 1990s, state and federal wildlife agencies were feeding about 3 percent (some 31,400) of the continent's one million elk. Today elk feeding continues in the same five states (it's not done in Canada), but there have been shifts in the numbers of elk fed in Idaho and Washington.

From 2,000 animals at 26 sites in the late 1990s, Idaho slashed winter feeding to just 150 elk during winter 2011-12. As Idaho wildlife manager Jon Rachael puts it, "Idaho determined that feedgrounds are not compatible with restored wolf populations."

Wildlife Professional 7(4): 42-47 (Winter 2013)

http://news.wildlife.org/twp/2013-winter/elk-winter-feeding-disease-facilitation/

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Thank You

www.michigan.gov/wildlifedisease